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the attempt to produce a genuine American literature—at least a literature dealing with American subjects. Brockden Brown, Cooper, and Irving founded American fiction. An indisputable poet arose in Bryant; a really original genius in Poe. The “Knickerbocker School,” if it produced nothing that was excellent, produced at least more than a little that was respectable. The revived New England, with Prescott, Parkman, Emerson, Whittier, Longfellow, went beyond respectability, and even promised excellence. It had also an original genius and delicate artist combined in Hawthorne; but with nearly all the rest, the fault was that the artists were not thinkers, and the thinkers were not artists. All things seemed to foreshadow the rise of a literature which should be original as well as artistic; should be distinctively American in moods of thought and feeling, and with some claim to take a place of its own among the literatures of the world.

Such a literature, however, has not yet appeared, though it may be at the door. We have writers in abundance, and the presses groan with American books, but somehow literary power seems to fail us. Prof. Wendell (the thread of whose narrative we have been following) in the section entitled “The Rest of the Story,” gives us a rather disheartening outlook. He thinks that “newspaper humour, the short stories of the magazines, and the popular Stage, seem the sources from which a characteristic American literature is most likely to spring.”

If these be indeed the germs from which our literature of the twentieth century is to take its origin, they must be endowed with some element of vitality not visible to the present writer.

This book is incomparably the best on the subject that has come under our notice. The movement in literature is co-ordinated with the social and political movements, without which treatment a so-called history of literature is nothing but a handbook for reference. The author's views are broad and liberal, his judgment sound, and the work shows throughout a candor and freedom from bias which are beyond praise.

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## FRENCH LITERATURE.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES,

SIRS:—*A Short History of French Literature*, by L. E. Kastner and H. E. Atkins of Cambridge, England, has recently appeared. Considering the small space into which the writers have compressed their vast materials, the main currents of tendency in the different periods of French literature are admirably stated. The writers are evidently permeated with the ideas of M. Brunetière, and their book is, on the theoretical side, in the main, a reflection of his doctrines. In the treatment of individual writers, likewise, the data furnished by the best French criticism are again very felicitously summarized, but an occasional slip in dealing with such a multitude of facts is inevitable.

In a work of such small compass it was impossible to aim at originality, to adapt the presentation to the Anglo-Saxon's angle of vision, to accentuate the things in French literature that he less easily apprehends or most needs, or to enlighten the subject by that constant comparison or contrast of literary phenomena offered by two parallel literatures.

A few corrections and observations are offered:

P. 60, it is stated that “already in 1550 Ronsard was fully established and looked upon as the prince of poets.” And on p. 63: “Already a year after the publication of the *Pléiade's* manifesto, Ronsard was recognized as the greatest living poet.” This is placing it at least several years too early and would imply instant recognition.

Du Bellay (p. 65) can hardly be called the most *original* poet of the *Pléiade*, since compared with the wide scope of Ronsard, he succeeded only in *la poésie intime*.

Montaigne (p. 85) is accused of a *somewhat hurried departure* at the time of the Bordeaux plague—in reality he was absent and refused to return. See his letters.

The statement (p. 88) that athletic training is too much neglected in Montaigne's system of education is not tenable. “Ce n'est pas assez de lui roidir l'âme, il lui faut aussi roidir les muscles, etc.” (*Essais* I, 25.) “Il le faut

rompre à la peine et aspreté des exercices, etc." (*ibid.*)

P. 118, the "Spaniard Montemayor" should read the "Portuguese Montemayor." P. 131, Tucis et Amarante should read Tircis et Amarante. P. 139, the date of *Les Plaideurs* is twice given as 1688 instead of 1668. P. 140, Don Cassius should read Dion Cassius. P. 153, the Abbé de Saint-Real becomes the abbot of St. Real.

P. 259, Dumas the Elder is called the grandson of a creole—the writer evidently attaching to this word a meaning it does not possess. Read *negress*. P. 298, *La Petite Roque* is classed among the novels instead of the *Contes* of Maupassant. P. 300, *Le Lys Rouge* is classed with *Sylvestre Bonnard* and *Le Livre de Mon Ami*; as,

"charming stories which deal in a playful way with various philosophic and scientific mysteries and curiosities, and in which there is much delicate fancy and very little striving after realism,"

which, of course, is wholly untrue of *Le Lys Rouge*. Anatole France is on the whole rather inadequately treated. In like manner the patriotic *motif* in Erckmann-Chatrian is overlooked, and they appear as painters of Lorraine peasant life only.

P. 301, L'Abbé Tigraine should read Tigrane. P. 302, for Nimrod et Cie, read Nemrod et Cie. P. 303, instead of *Pascal Gavoisse* read *Pascal Gêfosse*. The date of its publication was 1887, not 1889, and the date of Renan's *Études d'Histoire Religieuse* should be 1857, not 1856.

P. 288, Rodenbach certainly deserves mention as much as Rollinat, and p. 306, in the meagre paragraphs on contemporary critics, one misses Faguet beside Lemaître and France. Scherer, too, deserves to be mentioned.

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#### MODERN ENGLISH *ajar*.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES,

SIRS:—I beg to offer the following note on the voiced *j* (*dʒ*) in the modern *ajar*.

Skeat, *Concise Ety. Dict.*, says of this word: "Put for a *char*, on *char*, on the turn, . . . <A.

S. on *cerre*, on the turn. <A. S. *cyrran*, *cerran*, to turn;" Kluge and Lutz, *Eng. Etymology*, offer no explanation of the change of *ch* to *j*; the earliest instance of *ajar*, as given in the *New Eng. Dictionary*, is taken from Beckford's *Vathek* (1786), although a slightly different form, *at jar*, in the sense of 'partly opened,' is cited from Swift's *Abol. Chr.* (1708), and explained as due to false analogy of *at jar*, 'out of harmony,' which is found as early as 1553.

Does the word *ajar*, 'partly opened,' owe its *j* to false analogy of *at jar*, 'out of harmony'? It may be that such is the true explanation, but I venture to suggest that the change of *ch* (*tʃ*) into *j* (*dʒ*) is quite parallel to that of *s* into *z*, the latter taking place in Modern English when the *s* was preceded by an unstressed, and followed by a stressed, vowel: note the interchange of voiceless and voiced sounds in such pairs as *luxury* (*tʃ*) and *luxurious* (*gʒ*), *execute* (*kʃ*) and *executive* (*gʒ*), and also the retention of the voiceless (*tʃ*) in the dialectal *char*, as compared with the voiced (*dʒ*) in *ajar*. Moreover, Sweet, *HES.*, §928, points out the fact that there was at one time an alternation of voiceless *which* (*whiʃ*) with voiced (*whidʒ*) in such a word as *whichever*. It would seem, therefore, that the *j* in *ajar* may be another example of the voicing of sounds as a result of want of stress.

In connection with Swift's usage of *at jar*, in the sense of *ajar*, 'partly opened,' I should like to call attention to the fact that the Anglo-Indian *achar*, 'pickles,' is also found, according to the *NED.*, with the forms *atchaar*, *attjar*. Note also the obsolete *atchieve*, by the side of the present *achieve*. May not Swift's *at jar* be explained as due to a change in his pronunciation of the earlier *a char* rather than to false analogy of an expression entirely different in signification?

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#### GOETHE IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES,

SIRS:—Dr. Eugene Oswald, in his exhaustive bibliography of *Goethe in England and*